

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

FRB-01 INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

SP-02 CIEP-01 LAB-01 SIL-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

L-02 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-06 FEAE-00 NEA-06

CEA-01 STR-01 NIC-01 /092 W  
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R 271722Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4644

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PLAB, FR

SUBJECT: GISCARD'S SPEECH 26 NOVEMBER

1. SUMMARY. IN HIS 26 NOVEMBER RADIO-TV ADDRESS GISCARD HIGHLIGHTED IMPORTANCE CURB INFLATION BUT FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON UNEMPLOYMENT. HE STRESSED THEME OF NEED CHANGE FRENCH SOCIETY AND PROMISED PROGRAM AND TIMETABLE OF REFORMS NEXT SPRING. IN EMBASSY'S VIEW SPEECH, WHICH WAS DELIVERED IN GRAVE TONE, REPRESENTS ANOTHER SKILLFUL ATTEMPT BY GISCARD TO CREATE NATIONAL CONSENSUS FOR PAINFUL ADJUSTMENTS REQUIRED BY ECONOMIC SITUATION. HE PROMISED MONTHLY FIRESIDE CHATS TO KEEP FRENCH PEOPLE INFORMED OF WHERE THEY ARE BEING LED. END SUMMARY.

2. IN HIS SECOND ADDRESS TO THE NATION SINCE HIS ELECTION AS PRESIDENT, GISCARD MADE ANOTHER SKILLFUL EFFORT TO CONVINCE THE FRENCH PUBLIC THAT HIS ECONOMIC POLICIES HAVE BEEN THOUGHT THROUGH, WILL BE PURSUED WITH FIRMNESS AND ARE WORKING. HE ALSO SOUGHT WITH COMMENSURATE SKILL TO PROJECT THE IMAGE OF A PRESIDENT WHO IS NOT ONLY AWARE OF THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS BUT IS CONSTANTLY REFLECTING ON THEM AND READY TO MOBILIZE GOF RESOURCES TO KEEP FRANCE MOVING TOWARDS A MORE OPEN AND TENSION-FREE SOCIETY. SITTING BEFORE A CRACKLING ELYSEE FIREPLACE, GISCARD SPOKE IN A GRAVE BUT CONFIDENT TONE AND AT AN UNUSUALLY SLOW PACE DESIGNED TO ASSURE UNDERSTANDING OF HIS MESSAGE BY THE PROVINCIAL AUDIENCE WHICH OBVIOUSLY WAS HIS PRIMARY TARGET.

3. WHILE HE STRESSED THAT CURBING OF INFLATION TO BELOW 1 PERCENT PER MONTH BY NEXT SPRING WAS VITAL FOR FRENCH ECONOMY, HE RESERVED HIS MOST COMPASSIONATE AND THOUGHTFUL COMMENTS FOR THE PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYMENT. IN ANOTHER DISPLAY OF HIS TALENT FOR LUCID EXPLANATIONS OF COMPLEX PHENOMENA, HE INVITED FRENCH PEOPLE TO FACE "REALITY AS IT IS" AND TO THINK OF THE OIL PRICE INCREASE AS A 35 BILLION ANNUAL TAX FRANCE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MUST PAY ABROAD WHICH COMES TO 2,000 FRANCS PER FAMILY. CONSERVATION AND INCREASED EXPORT EFFORT ARE THE ONLY MEANS WHICH CAN REDUCE THIS LOSS OF GOF RESERVES. SPEECHES ALONE WILL NOT SUFFICE.

4. CLAIMING CREDIT FOR BEING THE FIRST TO ANTICIPATE A YEAR AGO THAT UNEMPLOYMENT WOULD BE FRANCE'S MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM, HE SKETCHED WITHOUT GOING INTO

DETAIL THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS TO DEFEND EMPLOYMENT:

(A) MAINTAIN MODERATE RATE OF GROWTH AS GOAL OF GOF EFFORTS TO SUSTAIN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY.

(B) ASSIST INDIVIDUAL COMPANIES OR INDUSTRIES HARDEST HIT BY THE ECONOMIC SITUATION. HE MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY UNPRECEDENTED EFFORT GOF WILL BE MAKING TO REORGANIZE THE AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY AND TO ASSIST SMALL CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES.

(C) HE HINTED THAT LOWERING OF RETIREMENT AGE, REDUCTION OF WORK WEEK AND INCREASED PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT MAY BE SOME OF THE MEANS TO BE USED AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT.

5. HE STRESSED THE THEME THAT SURVIVAL OF FRENCH

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CEA-01 STR-01 NIC-01 /092 W

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R 271722Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4645

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SOCIETY DEPENDS UPON CHANGE DESIGNED TO REDUCE  
INEQUALITIES AMONG FRENCH PEOPLE. HE HELD OUT PROMISE  
THAT GOF WILL PRESENT A PROGRAM AND TIMETABLE OF  
REFORMS NEXT SPRING WHICH WOULD CENTER ON INCOME TAX,  
REAL ESTATE SPECULATION, CAPITAL GAINS AND IMPROVED  
STATUS OF MANUAL WORK.

6. HE CONCLUDED WITH TWO PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS "SO  
YOU CAN GET TO KNOW ME BETTER." THE FIRST REFERRED  
TO HIS DESIRE NOT TO GOVERN FRANCE ALONE. HE MADE AN  
ELOQUENT APPEAL IN NAME OF DEMOCRACY FOR EVERYONE  
AND EVERY INSTITUTION INCLUDING MUNICIPALITIES,  
REGIONAL COUNCILS, TRADE UNIONS AND PRIVATE COMPANIES  
TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE GOVERNING OF FRANCE. IN HIS  
SECOND REMARK HE STRESSED THAT TO HIM ALL FRENCHMEN  
ARE THE SAME IN THEIR QUALITIES AND ASPIRATIONS. AT  
THIS POINT HE OFFERED AN UNEXPECTED ADMISSION THAT IT  
WAS TRUE THAT THE PROBLEMS OF SOME GROUPS ARE BEING  
HANDLED WITH MORE CONSIDERATION. DISCONCERTINGLY, HE  
FAILED TO FOLLOW UP ON THIS SURPRISINGLY FRANK  
ASSERTION, RETURNING INSTEAD TO A RENEWED ASSURANCE  
THAT ALL FRENCHMEN ARE THE SAME IN HIS EYES.

7. HE ENDED WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT HE WILL BE  
MAKING FIRESIDE CHATS EVERY MONTH SO THAT "YOU MIGHT  
KNOW WHO IS LEADING YOU AND WHERE YOU ARE GOING."

8. COMMENT. ALTHOUGH SUBJECT WAS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES, SPEECH WAS BASICALLY POLITICAL. IN EMBASSY'S VIEW, PURPOSE OF HIS SPEECH WAS TO MAKE ANOTHER DETERMINED EFFORT TO CREATE A MINIMUM OF NATIONAL CONSENSUS WHICH WOULD ACCEPT HARSH ECONOMIC REALITIES OF THE TIMES AND WOULD AT LEAST TOLERATE INESCAPABLE PAINFUL ADJUSTMENTS. INTERESTING IN THIS CONNECTION IS THE MANNER IN WHICH HE REFERRED TO 19 NOVEMBER NATION-WIDE STRIKES AS AN EXERCISE IN WHICH FRENCH PEOPLE REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE SO AS NOT TO AGGRAVATE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS BUT AT SAME TIME RECOGNIZED THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BOTH THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED AND THOSE WHO DID NOT SHARED A DEEP ANXIETY ABOUT THEIR JOBS AND THE FUTURE.

9. THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT WHAT GISCARD SAYS, HE SAYS EXTREMELY WELL. AS ONE COMMENTATOR REMARKED, IF HIS MONTHLY FIRESIDE CHATS PROVE TO BE OF THE SAME QUALITY AS LAST NIGHT'S THE FRENCH PEOPLE WILL NEVER REGRET GISCARD'S OFFER TO MAKE SUCH REGULAR RADIO-TV APPEARANCES. HIS DECISION TO DO SO WAS PROBABLY INFLUENCED BY THE PERSISTENT RUMORS ABOUT HIS PRIVATE LIFE AND ALLEGED LACK OF APPLICATION TO HIS WORK THAT HAVE BEEN IN CIRCULATION FOR THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS AND WHICH FINALLY GOT INTO PRINT, FIRST IN THE "CANARD ENCHAINE" (20 NOV) AND "LE MONDE" OF 27 NOVEMBER. GISCARD APPARENTLY RECOGNIZED THAT IF ECONOMIC SITUATION IS AS DIFFICULT AS HE WOULD LIKE THE FRENCH TO REALIZE IT IS, HE MUST RESPOND TO THE NEED THEY ARE BOUND TO FEEL FOR MORE LEADERSHIP FROM THE ELYSEE AND MORE ASSURANCE THAT THIS SITUATION IS RECEIVING TIRELESS ATTENTION AT THE TOP.

10. SPEECH LACKED SPECIFICS AND THIS PROBABLY WILL REDUCE THE IMPACT GISCARD SOUGHT THROUGH HIS CAREFUL DELIVERY AND LUCID LANGUAGE. THE PRESIDENT'S CRITICS WILL PROBABLY CONSIDER THE SPEECH AS ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO SURROUND THE FRENCH PEOPLE IN EXCITING ATMOSPHERICS FED BY THE PRESIDENT'S BRAIN POWER AND HIS UNCOMMON SKILL IN HANDLING MASS MEDIA. THIS CRITICISM IS NOT TOTALLY INACCURATE. WHAT THE CRITICS FORGET OR CHOOSE TO IGNORE IS GISCARD'S LIMITED ABILITY TO BE SPECIFIC WITH UNPOPULAR PROGRAMS IN THE ABSENCE OF A STRONG MAJORITY BEHIND HIM AND GENERALLY A LACK OF NATIONAL CONSENSUS. HE IS PROBABLY EMBARKING ON A MORE ACTIVE PROGRAM OF INFORMATION AND EXPLANATIONS IN THE HOPE THAT INTELLECTUALLY, IF NOT POLITICALLY, A MAJORITY OF FRENCH PEOPLE WILL RALLY BEHIND HIM.

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## Message Attributes

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